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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON AL-QAIDA GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Editorial Commentary

-- "Bush's fundamentalism"

Columnist Mazen Hammad, on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Ad-Dustour, comments about an ABC television report claiming that the Clinton administration did not show enough resolve in dealing with Al-Qaeda. Hammad comments: "What Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State during the Clinton administration, said is much more important than the report, because her remarks diagnosed the disease and pointed to the real wound. Albright said, in a direct response to Condoleezza Rice's claim that Clinton did not leave his successor any plans to fight Al-Qaeda, that George Bush adopted destructive policies that are based on his strong religious beliefs, and that since his strategy, that included the declaration of war against Iraq and categorizing some countries as the 'axis of evil', was based on these beliefs, then Bush was all the time acting, like Albright said, 'as if God stood by the United States'. This belief has brought disasters for the U.S. foreign policy. From what Albright said, we wonder what makes George Bush any different from any 'fundamental Islamist'. And if he believes that he is following divine orders, then what is the difference between him on one hand and Hamas and Hizbollah on the other, Hizbollah having scored 'a divine victory over Israel', and even more between him and Osama bin Laden who believes that he is serving God in his fight against the Americans? Albright's remarks clarify the American intelligence reports that found that 'neo-Jihadists' are developing a violent hatred for America's interventions in the Muslim world. Do we have the right to claim that rapprochement between a west led by religious trends and flagging slogans of democracy and an Islamic world whose 'secret' admiration for new Jihadists is increasing, is possible?"
HALE